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Splintered existence

VISUAL ARTS

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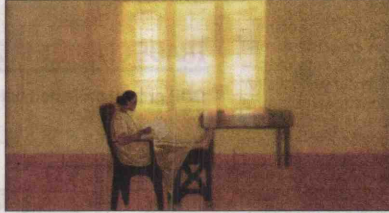
In the 21st century, the human body is torn between two worlds — the natural and the man-made. The contradictory pulls of these two worlds lead to a sort of schizophrenic existence for humans whose bodies are still attuned to natural processes that have been disrupted by modern inventions. The more the natural is lost, the more humans try to fill it up with the man-made and are left disappointed when the body does not adjust to these new rhythms. This dilemma of a splintered existence was captured by two concurrent exhibitions at Emami Art — *There are Tides in the Body* and *Imaginarium 4.0*.

There are Tides in the Body was an almost meditative experience with works marked by fluid lines, primal colours and repetitive patterns that mimic the comforting rhythms of nature. Melanie Gugelmann's acrylic-oils on paper were stunning, primordial landscapes that celebrated na-



ture in all its untamed glory (picture, left). Ruma Choudhury's landscapes, on the other hand, were minimal in both style and shade. Thomas Kern's black-and-white photographs documented the lives of people whose fates are decided by the vagaries of nature. The lines of Michael Günzburger's ink sketches were alive and pulsating with the gentle movements that animate nature. Radhika Agarwala breathed life into metal in her sculpture, which tinkled with the cadence of a mountain stream.

Suman Dey's origami-like folds that refused to stay in shape revealed that all attempts to tame nature would be futile. A different kind of futility afflicted the photographs and



the poetry of Naveen Kishore, who strikes a cautionary note about the imminent decay that lies in store. Mara Züst's works are a reminder of the wrath of nature and how it can sweep away everything in its path. Amidst these ominous messages, Santanu Debnath's detailed, lush and idyllic landscapes devoid of human presence leave viewers longing for a return to that Eden.

From the natural to the dreadful drudgery of the man-made.

At *Imaginarium 4.0*, Avijit Dutta depicts labourers in a factory setting that resembles the darkness of a prison. Even the well-lit interiors of a modern home can be a prison of a kind, shows Gayathri A.P. as she captures the sterile loneliness of

modern existence (picture, right). Along the same lines, Sayanee Sarkar's smudged, almost abstract, figurations are a testament to the ordinariness of everyday living where everything is a blur and nothing stands out. Nothing except the waste that humans generate that is, which informs Poojan Gupta's pieces. Even when there is clarity on the minutiae of everyday life, as in Bhaskar Bordoloi's surreal paintings, it highlights an ugly picture of the perversions of power.

In such a world, a close-up of the human form cannot be a pleasing picture. Instead, it is as broken and decaying as the world as Ritwika Ganguly shows in her watercolours. Sudip Jana explores lost connections with traditional crafts that were far more suited to a sustainable life, the fruitless human attempt to impose order in the world is captured in Poorvi Sultania's abstract cartographic works, and Bhanu Shrivastav's artworks offer a critical exploration of the connection between humans and the natural world, highlighting the historical influence each has had on the other's complex evolution over time.